



To: Council
From: Debi LucasSwitzer, CAO
Date of Meeting: March 23, 2022
Subject: Vaccination Verification Policy (COVID-19)

Recommendation:

Whereas on October 13, 2021 passed Resolution No. 258/2021 adopting a Vaccination Verification Policy Coronavirus;
And whereas Covid-19 related restrictions are decreasing.
Now therefore be it resolved that Council rescinds the Vaccination Verification Policy Coronavirus, retroactive to March 21, 2022.

Executive Summary:

The emergence of the SARS CoV-2 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) resulted in several adjustments to operating protocols at Township facilities. These adjustments followed the public health directions from the Government of Canada, the Provincial Ministry of Health, and Eastern Ontario Health Unit to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace and within our community. With the Government of Ontario's announcement that the Public Health Orders will soon be lifted, the Township must determine what steps to take to ensure the safety of its staff and the public who are accessing Township services. The lifting of the Public Health Orders does not mean there is no longer a risk of COVID-19.

At the March 9, 2022 Council Meeting, Council asked staff to bring a report forward to rescind the Vaccination Verification Policy to allow those who are currently on inactive status as a result of their non-compliance with the Vaccination Verification Policy to return to active duty.

Background:

Since March 2020, the Township has implemented various measures to prioritize the health and safety of residents and employees while continuing to provide services to our community. In doing so, the Township has had to adapt quickly to find innovative ways to deliver core services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In October 2022, Council approved the Vaccination Verification Policy (COVID-19), which was an important measure that complemented other workplace health and safety measures in place in accordance with applicable governing legislation. The Eastern Ontario Health Unit (EOHU) strongly recommended at the time that all employers consider implementing an employee vaccination policy to protect their workforce and to ensure the continuity of operations.

Since its implementation, more than 95% of Township of South Stormont employees are fully vaccinated.

The Provincial Government has announced that it is expected that on April 27, all remaining emergency orders and directives will be lifted or expire. At the March 9, 2022 Council Meeting, Council asked staff to bring a report forward to rescind the Vaccination Verification Policy to allow those who are currently on inactive status as a result of their non-compliance with the Vaccination Verification Policy to return to active duty, effective March 21, 2022.

At the time this report was written, no local area municipality had rescinded their Vaccination Verification Policy. Based on communication with local area municipalities, 1 municipality indicated it was intend to rescind their policy effective April 27 and 3 municipalities indicated their policies would remain in place. The others indicated the vaccination policy was under review and no decision had been made.

The Township will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and adjustment may be required based on recommendations by government health officials from federal, provincial or local health agencies.

Alignment with Community Strategic Plan:

Goal 1: Corporate Capacity

Objective 1.3: Human Resources

Risk and Asset Management Considerations:

Employers are legally required under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to take every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of workers. This includes protecting workers from hazards posed by infectious diseases. It is also important to ensure that members of the public who access municipal facilities to obtain services, are safe. If the Township does not implement such policy, workers and members of the public could be at a greater risk of the hazards of COVID-19.

Effective March 21, layers of protection such as masks and eye protection will no longer be required in indoor Township facilities, this could increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19. It's important to note that although some of our services are provided online/over the phone, there are many Township employees who provide services in-person with members of the public, i.e. building inspections, fire responses, marriage ceremonies, etc.

The Township of South Stormont has a relatively small workforce and should an outbreak take place in one of our workplaces, delivery of services to residents could be affected.

Options:

1. That Council rescind the Vaccination Verification Policy Coronavirus (COVID-19), attached to this report retroactive to March 21.
2. That Council does not rescind the Vaccination Verification Policy Coronavirus (COVID-19), and that the CAO continue to implement this, Policy.
3. That Council provide alternative direction to the CAO.

Others Consulted:

Directors

Area municipalities

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